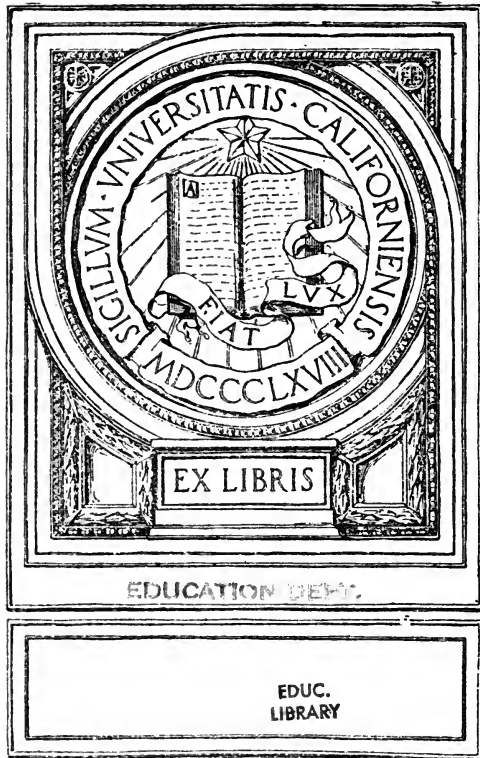


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## VII. THE CINCINNATI CONTINUATION SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

PLINY JOHNSTON

Woodward High School, Cincinnati, Ohio.

A certain sanitarium gave a test for insanity which it always claimed was absolutely conclusive. It was very simple. The patient was given a large dipper and was set to emptying a tub of water set under a hydrant with the water turned on. If the patient continued trying to empty the tub without turning the water off he was declared to be hopelessly insane. We, as schoolmen, are undertaking a similar task in our battle against ignorance, as long as we allow a stream of ignorant children to leave our schools, simply because they are fourteen years old.

The continuation school has not stopped the flow. That is a subject for more aggressive action than has yet been undertaken; yet it seems to me that this sort of school has done more to retard the outgoing current than any movement yet inaugurated.

We have in Cincinnati four types of continuation schools, each as well suited to the type of pupils for whom they were devised as we have been able to make them. We probably have made many mistakes—many more than we would have made had we been able to profit from the mistakes of someone else.

### MACHINE-SHOP CONTINUATION SCHOOL

This school was at first a private venture. Two large manufacturers employed a teacher for their men, a teacher not alone of the immediate and necessary principles of their work, but one able to give them also the technical outlook of the skilled machinist.

The apprentice class was the only class considered, and a few hours per week were set apart for the boys who wished to take the instruction.

<sup>1</sup>The author of this paper reports that he wrote to the school superintendents of the larger cities concerning the maintenance of continuation schools but failed to receive any accounts of work being done elsewhere. See A. J. Jones, "The Continuation School in the United States," *Bulletin of the U.S. Bureau of Education*, 1907, No. 1 (distributed gratis) for a discussion of the general problem.—EDITOR.



Encouraged by the results, more manufacturers entered the scheme. They realized that the business of giving an education is such a responsible one that an expert who has made it his life-work should have it in charge. Consequently they consulted the Board of Education and the work was put in charge of the Superintendent of Schools in September, 1909.

The school runs forty-eight weeks a year, eight hours a day, four and a half days a week, besides two half-days which are spent by the teachers in visiting the boys in the shop, seeing the conditions under which they work, consulting with the foremen about the needs of the boys, and getting ideas and material for their guidance in teaching.

The attendance averages about two hundred per week and about twenty-two to a class. The boys are paid their usual wages for attendance by the employers and are docked when absent or late.

A weekly report is made by the school to the employers in time for their pay-rolls. Two teachers are employed, both experienced shopmen and expert teachers. The cost of the school is about \$3,000 a year, or \$15 per boy. Twenty-one shops co-operate with the school.

The students are classified as closely as possible into four groups, according to their year of apprenticeship. The more immature come the early part of the week, and the advanced students the latter part of the week. The course is four years long, corresponding to the term of apprenticeship.

*Course of study.*—The course of study is as follows:

First year: Shop arithmetic, spelling, reading, composition, reading blueprints, drawing, geographical relations of shop materials and civics.

Second year: Objective geometry, science, iron, its manufacture and founding, blue prints, mechanical and technical drawing, shop practice, shop conventionalities and necessities, civics, and the reading of the lives of the world's improvers.

Third year: Geometry and algebra, physics, shop practice, foreman's question box, drawing, civics, and economic history and literature.

Fourth year: Trigonometry and applied mathematics, shop chemistry, shop practice, visiting of industrial plants, and discussing observations, especially of economy and waste, culture, the man as a wage-earner and citizen, debates.

All the work done in school is conducted as class study, the school not being equipped with machinery. The night school held in the

near-by large high school affords an opportunity for the boys to get a training in machinery.

The older men in the shop, who at first scoffed at the education of the apprentices, later made an appeal for some consideration for them. Accordingly, a night school, especially for them, was organized in the same building and by the same teachers, and the men are now studying four nights a week in order that the boys might not displace them. The fifth night the foremen attend school, and all unconsciously apprentices, mechanics, and foremen have learned what successful schoolmen have had burned into their souls, that there is no such thing as standing still, that they must advance, and that advance can only be made by hard study. At the end of the four years, if the work has been satisfactorily done, the boy receives a diploma, which stands for four years of toil scrutinized by foremen as well as teachers.

#### PRINTERS' CONTINUATION SCHOOL

An extension of this school has been made in the Printers' Continuation School, opened September, 1911. This differs, of course, somewhat from the original continuation school in its course of study, but far more in the manner in which it was suggested. This time it came from the workmen, the Allied Printing Trades Council and the Ben Franklin Club. This school meets one day per week, 7:30—11:30 A.M. and from 1:00—5:00 P.M. The boys are paid for attendance by their employers and forty-two have taken advantage of the instruction.

#### CONTINUATION SCHOOL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

The necessity of a continuation school for men is not as great as the necessity of a continuation school for women. No one who has ever engaged in any philanthropic work for girls in our large cities wonders why girls go to the bad; the wonder rather is how any of them ever remain clean. It is said that the New York shopgirl meets only one pure-minded woman in her whole city life, and that is her Sunday-school teacher. Since the Sunday-school teacher seems to be no longer a factor in the shopgirl's life, there is absolutely no influence, except accidental, that works for her good. Our girls now have one interest which they themselves have not created. Two hundred girls are now enrolled in salesmanship classes, in study of applied art and design, and of textiles and fabrics. As a part of this work there are twenty classes

where courses of home economics (nursing, sewing, and cooking) are given to young housewives. I would say of this course that it is the only one in all our public schools that is actually given at the time when it is most appropriate. The attendance on these classes is five hundred.

#### COMPULSORY CONTINUATION SCHOOLS

Last and most important of all in matter of numbers and influence is the compulsory continuation school.

Boards of education in Ohio are given permission to establish continuation schools for youths from fourteen to sixteen years of age, who are employed, and, after having established such a school, are given the right to compel attendance. The time required of the youth must not exceed eight hours per week. The Cincinnati board decided on four hours a week.

These pupils are divided into sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. As they are with us but one-half day per week their work must be of such a character that it will completely monopolize their time while in school, and cover as nearly as possible the leisure time outside. The four hours are divided into six periods, with a short recess.

*Work for girls.*—On the manual side the girls sew in the sixth, cook in the seventh, and make hats in the eighth grade. The girls of the sixth and eighth grades are given a period per day in industrial art of such a nature, for instance, as shirtwaist designs to supplement their work in sewing and hat designs for millinery. The girls are encouraged to note the fit of their own dresses, to bring garments from home which need remodeling, to finish garments cut out in school, to be able to tell long-wool cloth from shoddy, and finally to cultivate a taste, not for expensive, showy clothes, but for quiet clothes of honest worth. It may seem a trivial matter to direct the clothing of our young girls, but when we are told plainly that young girls are willing to barter their character for fine clothes and new hats the work does not seem out of place.

The scholastic side is not neglected, yet we cannot hope to cover the whole ground in arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history. We teach only the bare essentials in arithmetic, and there is certainly no great opportunity for close application in any branch. The usual lists of books were sent to these schools and the books were distributed, and very often the principal has been detected hiding such necessary books as algebra and formal grammar.

*Work for boys.*—Our boys are not set at the usual first work of manual training, namely, benchwork (not a particularly engaging work), but are immediately put in charge of a machine, a wood-turning lathe. The wheels go round and boys of the wilful sort cease thinking of themselves, because their attention is compelled by the machine they handle. By introducing the most active element first, their interest is at once secured and is thereafter easily directed to the quieter fields of manual training, such as mechanical drawing and pattern-work.

In the academic work the same principle of elimination and careful selection is followed as stated above in connection with the boys' courses. Every principle in arithmetic and grammar is on trial for its life, and many of the hoary haired have been thrown into the wastebasket.

*Parents interested.*—More attention is paid to the parents here than in any other school. On many an afternoon they come in "to see my boy or girl at work," and on many an afternoon they listen to the orchestra, the drama enacted by the pupils, the interesting talks, etc., which are given between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M., and then they return home with their sons and daughters, feeling that the world is growing better and that life is more worth while. Our unruly boys and girls (and there are a few that kind treatment and interesting work are not able to curb) simulate good behavior, because if they do not behave in school, their employer will be informed and they will be dropped.

*Pupils' interest in the work an important factor.*—The age of fourteen to sixteen inclusive is recognized as the rapid development of interest in self and life. There is need for care at this age in respect to the social life, and the reason that the high school in some of its phases is a most bitter disappointment is because of the lack of this social life. At this age the question of what the children learn is not as important as what they get by association, inference, and intuition. These young folks are put at automatic work in the shops. Their employers have learned by long experience that young persons, at this age, do not think—at least not about the interests of their employer or the care of his machinery. Thus they are set to work at machines where the only evidence of brains is found in the inventor. Day after day they do the same thing, the same way, and watch the clock till escaping time comes. Fatigue toxin has poisoned their bodies and their minds. The relief from that toxin is sought in amusement, and the amusement at hand is not of the right sort. Our course of study seeks, first of all, to interest the pupils in their work; and second, to give them something to think about during the

week. The girls are sewing and drawing and watching hat styles in the windows and on people. The boys go to the public library and read up to be ready for the other fellow in debate.

The employers insisted that we should teach the essentials, and these, in their opinion, were arithmetic and spelling. But when we attempted to teach the good old standard studies in the same old way, we were met with sullen, unresponsive silence. The reason was not hard to find. The principal questioned a class, thirty boys in all, as to why they had stopped school at the end of the fifth grade. Four boys stopped because their parents actually needed them, and twenty-six stopped because they were tired of school. What would you think of the continuation school that had so little pliability as to teach these sullen boys the same way in which the hated school they had just escaped from had done? Need we give any other reason to show why the old-time methods will not do in the continuation school?

Girls and boys go to the bad between the ages of fourteen to sixteen. Of course it may occur after that period, but unrestrained, unbridled youth, at this period, lays the foundation for a life of bitterness. The ideal school would keep children from fourteen to sixteen in school all the time, but since we have not, as yet, ideal laws, we must not let them run unrestrained after fourteen. The employer is too busy, but between the supervisor of the continuation school and the employer there is much useful supervision bestowed upon the youth.

The continuation school for older persons is a comparatively simple problem. These men and women have their fairly fixed habits, and it is not so much the individual that must be taken into account, but his life-work. That is, his trade is his concern and ours too. But in the compulsory continuation school we have the young animal to deal with, and the choice of the young animal's trade. He is vagrant both in body and mind. I will give you a type—not the worst by any means, but a boy taken at random. Here is his record, as taken from the Labor Certificate Office:

K828, WHITTIER SCHOOL, 7TH GRADE, AGE 15

Oct.	17, 1910	Ohio Messenger Co.....	\$5.00
Nov.	12, 1910	Robt. Clark Errand Boy.....	5.00
Dec.	3, 1910	Cincinnati Hat Frame Co.....	
Mar.	3, 1911	Victor Lamp Co.....	4.50
Apr.	10, 1911	Wm. Newmark Co.....	
May	15, 1911	Rubel Bros.....	4.00
June	15, 1911	Krippendorff, Dittman Co.....	

This boy is drifting and I am told the girls are no better. This problem confronts all cities, and after the youths are gathered together, another and more perplexing problem will present itself, as it has to us. These young animals are pining for excitement, interest, sensation, and change. Most of them belong to the class of automatic workers, a most dangerous class to handle. Three ways of teaching were before us: first, to teach as we had always done, trusting to the sense of accomplishment to cause zest for future work; but I believe that no one who has ever faced a continuation school would ever advocate this method; second, to furnish sensational pleasure, to amuse, delight, anything to take their minds off their work, in order to present an antidote for the accumulated fatigue poison—the suggestion of a sociological expert; third, to teach the essential subjects in the most interesting way, to delight the mind and the eye by proper entertainments, and teach somewhat along the line of their work.

We have chosen the third plan and we have not yet repented of it, possibly because we have not tried it long enough. We can make no boast, except that we have succeeded in bringing to the front one more very difficult line of school work.









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